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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Docket No: 9450/0K683US0

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of: Yoshihiro SUZUKI et al.

Serial No. 09/762,319

Art Unit: 3671

Confirmation No.: 3652

Filed: February 6, 2001

Examiner: Robert E. PEZZUTO

For: ADJUSTABLE JOINT UNIT AND ITS PRODUCTION METHOD

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Pending claims as of September 3, 2002

September 3, 2002

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

Sir:

2. (Amended) An adjustable joint unit as claimed in claim 11, wherein said
crimped portion further comprises:

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a first step portion disposed along said inner rim of said mounting opening portion of said socket portion, said first step portion comprising a flange-like shape and extending toward said closing member, and

a second step portion disposed along an edge of said first step portion , said second step portion comprising a flange-like shape and extending toward said closing member.

4. (Amended) A method of producing an adjustable joint unit comprising steps of:

forming an arm by pressing a generally plate-shaped arm base member said arm comprising a thickness, so as to form a generally cylindrical socket portion having an axis extending in the same direction as said thickness of said arm and open at both ends, said socket portion comprising an aperture portion at a protruding end and a mounting opening portion at a base end of said socket portion;

inserting a ball head portion of a ball stud through said mounting opening portion into said socket portion of said arm;

disposing a bearing seat between said ball head portion and said socket portion;

fitting a closing member into said mounting opening portion of said socket portion to close off said mounting opening portion; and

forming a crimped portion adapted to receive and hold an outer rim of said closing member by crimping an inner rim of said mounting opening portion, said crimped

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portion extends inward in a flange-like shape and comprises steps having different thicknesses, said inner step thinner than said outer step.

5. (Amended) A method of producing an adjustable joint unit as claimed in claim 4, further comprising the steps:

forming the crimping portion by forming a first step portion along said inner rim, said first step portion extending inward like a flange, and

crimping an edge of said first step portion so as to form a second step portion extending inward like a flange, said crimped portion comprises one or more steps having different thicknesses, wherein said inner step being thinner than said outer step.

7. (Amended) An adjustable joint unit as described in claim 11, wherein

said crimped portion is formed by a crimping process, comprising rolling rotatable rollers along said inner rim of said mounting opening portion of said socket portion.

8. (Amended) An adjustable joint unit as described in claim 2, wherein

said crimped portion is formed by a crimping process, comprising rolling rotatable rollers along said inner rim of said mounting opening portion of said socket portion.

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9. (Amended) A method of producing an adjustable joint unit as described in claim 4, further comprising the steps:

forming said crimping portion by a crimping process, said crimping process comprising the steps:

rolling rotatable rollers along said inner rim of said mounting opening portion of said socket portion.

10. (Amended) A method of producing an adjustable joint unit as described in claim 5, further comprising the steps:

forming said crimping portion by a crimping process, said crimping process comprising the steps:

rolling rotatable rollers along said inner rim of said mounting opening portion of said socket portion

11. (New) An adjustable joint unit comprising:

a ball stud, comprising:

a stud portion; and

a ball head portion opposite said stud portion;

a bearing seat slidingly containing said ball head portion, comprising:

an insertion hole adapted to receive said stud portion;

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a generally plate-shaped arm having a thickness, comprising:

a generally cylindrical socket portion being open at both ends and containing said bearing seat, comprising:

a protruding end;

a base end opposite said protruding end;

an axis extending in the direction of said thickness of said arm;

an aperture portion disposed at said protruding end and allowing said stud portion to protrude therethrough;

a mounting opening portion disposed at said base end and comprising an inner rim; and

a crimped portion disposed along said inner rim comprising:

a flange-like shape;

an outer step; and

an inner step thinner than said outer step; and

a closing member adapted to close said mounting opening portion and applying a preliminary load to said ball head portion, comprising an outer rim, wherein said inner rim receives and holds said outer rim of said closing member.

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